

Remarks

The applicants appreciate Examiner Winter's thorough examination of the prior art in connection with the present patent application. However, the applicants respectfully traverse the examiner's rejection of claims 1-16 and 19-23 under 35 U.S.C. 103.

More specifically, neither the Evans reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,775,647) nor the Foley reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,249,120) make any reference to supply-chain based cost estimating. Independent claims 1, 12 and 19 each recite outputting a value chain based, in part, on "supply tier." Supply chain information is not an input to (or output of) the cost estimating process described in Evans or Foley.

"Supply tier" aspects of the applicants' invention are also recited in dependent claims 2 ("the embedded value chain is illustrated *by supplier tier*"), claim 7 ("*supplier's* cost estimate format"), claim 13 ("the embedded value chain is illustrated *by supplier tier*"), claim 16 ("*supplier's* cost estimate format"), and claim 20 ("*supplier's* cost estimate format"). The Evans and Foley reference do not teach or suggest any of these limitations.

The Evans and Foley references also fail to teach or suggest "embedded value chain" aspect of the invention recited in dependent claims 2 and 13, and functionality for "reducing and expanding a scope for the value chain" as recited in dependent claim 21. The Evans reference merely teaches a static summary of manufacturing cost for particular parts or assemblies (e.g. Fig. 15).


Because the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the elements of the pending claims, the applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's rejection be withdrawn.

Applicants have made a genuine effort to respond to the Examiner's objections and rejections in advancing the prosecution of this case. Applicants believe all formal and substantive requirements for patentability have been met and that this case is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

No additional fee is believed to be due as the result of the filing of this paper. However, any additional fees or credits should be applied to Deposit Account 06-1510 (Ford Global Technologies, Inc.) as authorized by the original transmittal letter in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

BRUNO JANDASEK ET AL.

By 
John S. Le Roy
Reg. No. 48,150
Attorney for Applicants

Date: Aug. 1, 2005

BROOKS KUSHMAN P.C.
1000 Town Center, 22nd Floor
Southfield, MI 48075-1238
Phone: 248-358-4400
Fax: 248-358-3351